

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A customer self-checkout system for processing article purchases, the system comprising:
a self-checkout station comprising:
 - 5 an input device configured to receive product code input designating an article for purchase;
 - a deactivation device configured to produce a deactivation region effecting deactivation of a security tag attached to an article for purchase; and
 - a prompting system configured to present a deactivation prompt to direct a user to
 - 10 position an article for purchase within the deactivation region to effect security tag deactivation.
2. The system of claim 1 wherein the prompting system is configured to present a second prompt directing a user to enter a product code using the input device.
3. The system of claim 2 further comprising:
 - 15 a target visibly disposed proximate the deactivation region at the checkout station;
 - and wherein
 - the second prompt instructs the user to move the article to touch the target to effect security tag deactivation.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the prompting system is configured to present the deactivation prompt after a receipt of a product code by the input device.
5. The system of claim 4 wherein the system further comprises:
 - a database system coupled to the self-checkout station and comprising stored data
 - 5 identifying articles having attached security tags and articles not having attached security tags;
 - a processor configured to receive product code input from the input device and to query the database to determine whether an article designated by said received product code input has an attached security tag; and wherein
 - 10 the prompting system is configured to present the deactivation prompt when the article has an attached security tag and to not present the deactivation prompt when the article does not have an attached security tag.
6. The system of claim 5 wherein the prompting system is further configured to present the deactivation prompt when the stored data associated with an article does not
- 15 indicate whether said article has an attached security tag or not.
7. The system of claim 1, further comprising a sensor for sensing the presence of an article within the deactivation region.
8. The system of claim 7 further comprising:

a bagging platform comprising a scale operatively coupled to the prompting system
and configured to detect weight of bagged articles; and wherein
the prompting system is configured to present the deactivation prompt when a weight
change is detected by the bagging scale and the sensor has not sensed presence of
5 the article within the deactivation region.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the prompting system is configured to present a
prompt providing instructions to a user to place the article into a bag on the bagging
platform.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein the bagging platform further comprises a bag holder
10 adapted to hold a bag for receiving articles.

11. The system of claim 7 wherein the prompting system is configured to present a
feedback prompt to confirm deactivation of the security tag after the sensor senses
presence of an article within the deactivation region.

12. The system of claim 11 wherein the feedback prompt comprises a prompt instructing
15 the user to place the article in a bag.

13. The system of claim 1 wherein the input device comprises a device selected from the
group consisting of a bar code scanner, a scanner-scale module, a touch-screen
display, and a keypad.

14. The system of claim 1 wherein the prompt comprises an animated prompt.

15. The system of claim 1, wherein the prompt is provided by an audio device.

16. A customer self-checkout system for processing article purchases, the system comprising:

5 a self-checkout station comprising:

an input device configured to receive product code input designating an article for purchase;

a deactivation device configured to produce a deactivation region effecting deactivation of a security tag attached to an article for purchase;

10 a sensor for sensing the presence of an article within the deactivation region;

a target visibly disposed proximate the deactivation region;

a bagging platform comprising a bag holder adapted to hold a bag for receiving articles and a scale operatively configured to detect weight of bagged articles;

a database system coupled to the self-checkout station and comprising stored data

15 identifying articles having attached security tags and articles not having attached security tags;

a processor coupled to the input device, the sensor, the bagging platform and the database, and the processor being configured to receive product code input from the input device and to query the database to determine whether an

20 article designated by received product code input has an attached security tag; and

a prompting system configured to present,

a prompt directing a user to enter a product code using the input device;
a first deactivation prompt to direct a user to position an article for
purchase within the deactivation region to effect security tag
deactivation when a database query determines that the article has an
5 attached security tag and to not present the first deactivation prompt
when the query determines that the article does not have an attached
security tag
a second deactivation prompt when a weight change is detected by the
bagging scale and the sensor has not sensed presence of the article
10 within the deactivation region; and
a feedback prompt to confirm deactivation of the security tag after the
sensor senses presence of an article within the deactivation region.

17. A computer-implemented method of operation of a self-checkout system comprising
a self-checkout station having an input device, a security tag deactivation device, and
15 a prompting system configured to present user prompts, the method comprising:
receiving at an input device a product code designating an article for purchase;
and
presenting a deactivation prompt directing a user to position an article for
purchase within a deactivation region produced by the security tag
20 deactivation device to effect deactivation of a security tag attached to the
article.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising presenting a second prompt directing a user to enter a product code using the input device.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the second prompt is presented prior to the presenting of the deactivation prompt.

5 20. The method of claim 17 wherein:

presenting the deactivation prompt comprises presenting a prompt directing a user to move the article to touch a target visibly disposed proximate the deactivation region.

21. The method of claim 17 wherein presenting the deactivation prompt comprises
10 presenting the deactivation prompt after a receipt of a product code by the input device.

22. The method of claim 21 wherein the method further comprises:
after receipt of a product code, querying a database system comprising stored data
identifying articles having attached security tags and articles not having attached
15 security tags to determine whether an article designated by said received product code input has an attached security tag; and wherein
presenting the deactivation prompt comprises presenting the deactivation prompt
when the article has an attached security tag; and the method further comprises:

inhibiting presentation of the deactivation prompt when the article does not have an attached security tag.

23. The method of Claim 17 wherein the self-checkout system further comprises utilizing a sensor configured to sense the presence of an article in a security tag deactivation region.

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24. The method of Claim 23 wherein the self-checkout system further comprises a bagging platform comprising a bagging scale and the method further comprises: presenting the deactivation prompt when a weight change is detected by the bagging scale and the sensor has not sensed presence of an article within the deactivation region.

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25. The method of claim 24 prompting a user to place the article into a bag on the bagging platform.

26. The system of claim 23 wherein the prompting system is configured to present a feedback prompt to confirm deactivation of the security tag after the sensor senses presence of an article within the deactivation region.

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27. The system of claim 26 wherein the feedback prompt comprises a prompt instructing the user to place the article in a bag.

28. The method of claim 24 further comprising:

sensing movement of an article within the deactivation region;

detecting placement of the article on a bagging platform; and,

prompting a user to pass the article within the deactivation region when a change in

5 weight detected by the scale is attributed to the placement an article without

sensing by the sensor presence of the article in the deactivation region.

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